Potential of cruise tourism

*317. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a great potential for cruise tourism in India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have constituted a committee to make India an attractive cruise tourism destination;

(c) if so, what are the recommendations made by the committee, and

(d) the details of ports identified in the Eastern side of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKACHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A High Power Steering Group has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister Shipping, Road Transport & Highways with Union Minister of State for Tourism as Co-Chairperson to formulate Cruise Shipping Policy in the country. The recommendations of this steering Group include formation of Working Groups to look into issues like— Immigration; Customs Clearances; Quarantine Restrictions; Identification of Ports; Infrastructural Facilities; Connectivity; Taxation Issues; Tourism Related Issue; and Cabotage to develop cruise shipping policy for India.

(d) The ports identified on eastern part of the country are Tuticorin Port and Chennai Port.

New Airports In Metros

*318. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have ambitious plan to construct new airports in all four metres viz. Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata in view of the congestion in the present airports due to increased passengers flow;

(b) if so, the stage of airports expansion and construction works in these metres; and

(c) whether Government also propose to upgrade other important airports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. The Government of India at present has no plan to construct new airports in Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata. Keeping in view the impending saturation of the existing Mumbai airport, a proposal to set up a second airport at Mumbai has been initiated by the Government of Maharashtra.

(b) However, the existing metro airports at Delhi and Mumbai have been approved for restructuring and modernization through the joint venture route, wherein Airports Authority of India and Got Public Sector Undertakings together will hold 26% stake and the balance 74% stake will be held by the Joint Venture Partners selected through a global competitive bidding process. Invitation to Register Expression of Interest (ITREOI) was issued on 17th February 2004. In response to ITREOI, ten parties registered their interest out of which nine parties were short-listed. Request For Proposal and other transaction Documents have been issued on 1st April 2005 to the short-listed nine parties.

(c) Yes, Sir. It has also been decided to take up development of 25 tentatively selected non-metro airports in phases with focus on airside and city side development.

E-Governance of Panchayats

*319. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are successful in facilitating all Panchayats with Information Technology as per the resolution adopted in the Seventh Round Table Conference of Ministers in-charge of Panchayati Raj;

(b) if so, how many Panchayats in the country have this facility; and

(c) whether the use of this technology is helping in good governance?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is preparing a mission mode Project for e-Governance at the Gram Panchayat level under the National e-Governance Plan. It is envisaged that this will enable all